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Raymond Williams

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*A vocabulary
of culture
and society*

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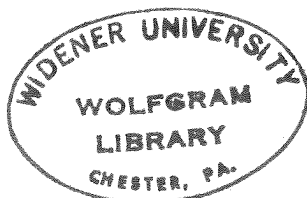
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movement. Thus it could be made compatible with the sense of **realism** that was distinguished from *naturalism*, and especially with that sense of a conscious commitment to understanding and describing real forces (a commitment that at its best includes understanding the processes of consciousness and composition that are involved in any such attempt). More often, however, the argument has been linked, in particular intellectual formations, with the idealist modes of **FORMALISM** and of **STRUCTURALISM** (qq.v.), where the strength of attention to the detailed practice of composition, and especially to the basic forms and structures within which composition occurs, goes along with or can be used to justify an indifference to the forces other than literary and artistic and intellectual practice which it was the purpose of the broader **realism** (even at times naively) to take into radical account. The historical significance of **Realism** was to make social and physical **reality** (in a generally materialist sense) the basis of literature, art and thought. Many marginal points can be made against the methods historically associated with this purpose, and from a frankly idealist position many radical points can be made against the purpose itself. But what has most often happened, recently, is that the marginal points have been extended, loosely, as if they were radical points, or that making the marginal points has been so absorbing that the radical points at issue, from a materialist or an idealist standpoint, have been in effect ignored.

It is hardly necessary to add that the critical attention which is necessary in most cases of the use of **real**, **realistic** and **reality** is at least equally necessary in the case of this extraordinary current variation in uses of **realism**.

See CONVENTION, CREATIVE, FICTION, MATERIALISM, MYTH, NATURALISM, PRACTICAL, RATIONAL, SUBJECTIVE

REFORM

Reform as a verb came into English in C14, from *fw reformer*, oF, *reformare*, L – to form again. In most of its early uses it is very difficult to distinguish between two latent senses: (i) to restore to its original form; (ii) to make into a new form. There are clear early

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examples of each use, but in many contexts the idea of changing
 something for the better was deeply bound up with the idea of restor-
 ing an earlier and less corrupted condition (cf. *amend*, from *fw*
emendare, L – to free from fault, which was often interchangeable
 with **reform** but which came through with a slighter or more limited
 reference; cf. also *reaction*). The first noun from the verb was
reformation, from C15, and this shows the same ambiguity. The
 great religious **Reformation** of C16 had a strong sense of purifica-
 tion and restoration, even when it needed new forms and institutions
 to achieve this. The continuing play in **reform** is clear in the
 exchange in *Hamlet* (III, ii):

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.
 O, reform it altogether.

From IC17 an alternative spelling, **re-form** ('Re-form and New-
 Mold', 1695) made some of the stronger uses clearer. Nevertheless
reform in its most general sense has continued to carry implications
 of amending an existing state of affairs in the light of known or
 existing principles, and this use can move towards *restoration* as
 often as towards *innovation*. The usual noun became **reform**, from
 mC17, but it was still mainly a noun of process, like **reformation**,
 until IC18. A C18 gloss (Bailey) gave 'Reform . . . a re-establishment
 or revival of a former neglected discipline; also a correction of
 reigning abuses'. **Reform** as a definite noun, for a specific measure,
 was common from IC18. In the same period it was capitalized and
 abstracted as a political tendency, mainly in relation to Parliament
 and the suffrage, where quite new forms were being proposed but
 often with a sense of the *restoration* of liberty.

In the struggle over Parliamentary representation, **Reform**
 became a radical term (cf. **Radical Reform** from IC18) and
parliamentary reformists who had been *subtle* (not a kind term) as
 early as 1641 were in correspondence with Jacobins (Windham,
 1792) and were seen as **violent reformists** (meaning 'ardent') by
 Lady Granville in 1830. The play in the word is evident. Cf. 'these
 Unions were to be for the promotion of the cause of reform, for the
 protection of life and property against the detailed but irregular
 outrages of the mob . . .' (*The Times*, 1 December 1830); 'that
 reform which had thus been obtained appeared to him to have been
 the ultimate means of strengthening the hands of corruption and

oppression' (Rider, *Leeds Times*, 12 April 1834; this and the preceding example are quoted in E. P. Thompson: *The Making of the English Working Class*, 810–26; 1963).

It was from this kind of controversy, assisted by the play in the word, that the C20 sense of **reformism** and **reformist** emerged. **Reformism** was a new word coined in the controversy within the socialist movement, especially between 1870 and 1910. The issue was whether capitalist society could be changed, or was indeed changing itself, in gradual, local and specific ways, or whether such **reforms** were trivial or illusory, either masking the need for the replacement of capitalism by socialism (REVOLUTION (q.v.)) or actually intended to prevent this replacement. **Reformism** in C20 use has had both these latter senses, and **reformist**, which from C16 had been generally equivalent to **reformer** (with which it was contemporary), has now been specialized to the sense of **reformism**, leaving **reformer** in the older general sense.

See FORM, RADICAL, REVOLUTION

REGIONAL

Region came into English from eC14, from fw *regionem*, L – direction, boundary, district, rw *regere*, L – to direct or to rule. Early uses of region as 'kingdom' became less important than the broader sense of a country or large area, as in Caxton: 'came in to the regyon of fraunce'. There is an evident tension within the word, as between a distinct area and a definite part. Each sense has survived, but it is the latter which carries an important history. Everything depends, in the latter sense, on the term of relation: a part of what? There are many general uses, as in 'infernal regions' or 'eternal Regions' (Milton, 1667); or 'the regyon of the ayer' (Caxton, 1477); or 'every region of science' (Johnson, 1751) or 'the region of mythology' (Jowett, 1875). But the critical use is in description of different parts of the earth: 'Libya is a region or coste of the countree of Afrika' (1542). This still primarily physical designation opened the way to a political use, in which **region** became an administered area, and thus part of a larger

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REVOLUTION

Revolution now has a predominant and specialized political meaning, but the historical development of this meaning is significant. The word came into English from C14, from fw *revolucion*, oF, *revolutionem*, L, from rw *revolvere*, L – to revolve. In all its early uses it indicated a **revolving** movement in space or time: 'in whiche the other Planetes, as well as the Sonne, do finyshe their revolution and course according to their true tyme' (1559); 'from the day of the date heereof, to the full terme and revolution of seven yeeres next ensuing' (1589); 'they recoyl again, and return in a Vortical motion, and so continue their revolution for ever' (1664). This primary use, of a recurrent physical movement, survives mainly in a technical sense of engines: **revolutions** per minute, usually shortened to **revs**.

The emergence of the political sense is very complicated. It is necessary to look first at what previous word served for an action against an established order. There was of course *treason* (with its root sense of *betraying* lawful authority) but the most general word was *rebellion*. This was common in English from C14. The sense had developed in Latin from the literal 'renewal of war' to the general sense of armed rising or opposition and, by extension, to open resistance to authority. *Rebellion* and *rebel* (as adjective, verb and noun) were then the central words for what we would now normally (but significantly not always) call **revolution** and **revolutionary**. There was also, from C16, the significant development of *revolt*, from fw *révolter*, F, *revolutare*, L – to roll or revolve, which from the beginning, in English, was used in a political sense. The development of two words, *revolt* and **revolution**, from the sense of a circular movement to the sense of a political rising, can hardly be simple coincidence.

Revolution was probably affected, in its political development, by the closeness of *revolt*, but in English its sense of a circular movement lasted at least a century longer. There are probably two underlying causes for the transfer (in both *revolt* and **revolution**)

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from a circular movement to a rising. On the one hand there was the simple physical sense of the normal distribution of power as that of the *high* over the *low*. From the point of view of any established authority, a *revolt* is an attempt to turn over, to turn upside down, to make topsy-turvy, a normal political order: the *low* putting themselves against and in that sense above the *high*. This is still evident in Hobbes, *Leviathan*, II, 28: 'such as are they, that having been by their own act Subjects, deliberately revolting, deny the Sovereign Power' (1651). On the other hand, but eventually leading to the same emphasis, there was the important image of the Wheel of Fortune, through which so many of the movements of life and especially the most public movements were interpreted. In the simplest sense, men revolved, or more strictly were revolved, on Fortune's wheel, setting them now up, now down. In practice, in most uses, it was the downward movement, the *fall*, that was stressed. But in any case it was the *reversal* between up and down that was the main sense of the image: not so much the steady and continuous movement of a wheel as the particular isolation of a top and bottom point which were, as a matter of course, certain to change places. The crucial change in **revolution** was at least partly affected by this. As early as 1400 there was the eventually characteristic:

It is I, that am come down

Thurgh change and revolucioun. (*Romance of the Rose*, 4366)

A sense of **revolution** as alteration or change is certainly evident from C15: 'of Elementys the Revoluciouns, Chaung of tymes and Complexiouns' (Lydgate, c. 1450). The association with *fortune* was explicit as late as mC17: 'whereby one may see, how great the revolutions of time and fortune are' (1663).

The political sense, already well established in *revolt*, began to come through in **revolution** from eC17, but there was enough overlap with older ways of seeing change to make most early examples ambiguous. Cromwell made a revolution, but when he said that 'God's revolutions' were not to be attributed to mere human invention (Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Cromwell*, III, 590–2) he was probably still using the word with an older sense (as in *Fortune*, but now *Providential*) of external and DETERMINING (q.v.) movements. Indeed the most fascinating aspect of this complex of words, in C17, is that Cromwell's revolution was called, by its

enemies, the *Great Rebellion*, while the relatively minor events of 1688 were called by their supporters the **Great** and eventually the **Glorious Revolution**. It is evident from several uses that **revolution** was gaining a political sense through C17, though still, as has been noted, with overlap to general mutability or to the movements of Fortune or Providence. But it is very significant that in IC17 the lesser event attracted the description **Revolution** while the greater event was still *Rebellion*. **Revolution**, that is to say, was still the more generally favourable word, and from as late as 1796 we can find that distinction: 'Rebellion is the subversion of the laws, and Revolution is that of tyrants'. (*Subversion*, it will be noted, depends on the same physical image, of turning over from below; and cf. *overthrow*.) The main reason for the preference of **revolution** to *rebellion* was that the cyclical sense in the former implied a *restoration* or *renovation* of an earlier lawful authority, as distinct from action against authority without such justification.

From IC17 the sense of **revolution** in English was dominated by specific reference to the events of 1688. The ordinary reference (Steele, 1710; Burke, 1790) was to 'the Revolution', and **revolutioner**, the first noun for one engaged in or supporting **revolution**, was used primarily in that specific context. Yet a new general sense was slowly making its way through, and there was renewed cause for distinction between *rebellion* and **revolution**, according to point of view, in the rising and declaration of independence of the American states. **Revolution** won through in that case, both locally and generally. In a new climate of political thought, in which the adequacy of a political system rather than loyalty to a particular sovereign was more and more taken as the real issue, **revolution** came to be preferred to **rebellion**, by anyone who supported *independent* change. There is a surviving significance in this, in our own time. *Rebellion* is still ordinarily used by a dominant power and its friends, until (or even after) it has to admit that what has been taking place – with its own *independent* cause and loyalties – is a **revolution**, though also with an added sense of scale: 'Sire . . . it is not a revolt, it is a revolution' (Carlyle, *French Revolution*, V vii; 1837). (It is worth noting that *revolt* and *revolting* had acquired, from mC18, an application to feeling as well as to action: a feeling of disgust, of turning away, of *revulsion*; this probably accentuated the distinction. It is curious that *revulsion* is etymologically associated

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with *revel*, which itself goes back to *rebellare*, L – to rebel. *Revel* became specialized, through a sense of riotous mirth, to any lively festivity; *rebel* took its separate unfavourable course; *revulsion*, from a physical sense of drawing away, took on from eC19 its sense of drawing away in disgust.)

It was in this state of interaction between the words that the specific effects of the French Revolution made the modern sense of **revolution** decisive. The older sense of a restoration of lawful authority, though used in occasional justification, was overridden by the sense of necessary innovation of a new order, supported by the increasingly positive sense of PROGRESS (q.v.). Of course the sense of achievement of the ORIGINAL rights of man was also relevant. This sense of making a new *human* order was always as important as that of overthrowing an old order. That, after all, was now the crucial distinction from *rebellion* or from what was eventually distinguished as a **palace revolution** (changing the leaders but not the forms of society). Yet in political controversy arising from the actual history of armed risings and conflicts, **revolution** took on a specialized meaning of violent overthrow, and by IC19 was being contrasted with EVOLUTION (q.v.) in its sense of a new social order brought about by peaceful and constitutional means. The sense of **revolution** as bringing about a wholly new social order was greatly strengthened by the socialist movement, and this led to some complexity in the distinction between **revolutionary** and *evolutionary* socialism. From one point of view the distinction was between violent overthrow of the old order and peaceful and constitutional change. From another point of view, which is at least equally valid, the distinction was between working for a wholly new social order (SOCIALISM as opposed to CAPITALISM (qq.v.)) and the more limited modification or REFORM (q.v.) of an existing order ('the pursuit of equality' within a 'mixed economy' or 'post-capitalist society'). The argument about means, which has often been used to specialize **revolution**, is also usually an argument about ends.

Revolution and **revolutionary** and **revolutionize** have of course also come to be used, outside political contexts, to indicate fundamental changes, or fundamentally new developments, in a very wide range of activities. It can seem curious to read of 'a **revolution** in shopping habits' or of the '**revolution** in transport', and of course there are cases when this is simply the language of publicity, to

describe some 'dynamic' new product. But in some ways this is at least no more strange than the association of **revolution** with VIOLENCE (q.v.), since one of the crucial senses of the word, early and late, restorative or innovative, had been simply important or fundamental change. Once the factory system and the new technology of IC18 and eC19 had been called, by analogy with the French Revolution, the INDUSTRIAL (q.v.) **Revolution**, one basis for description of new institutions and new technologies as **revolutionary** had been laid. Variations in interpretation of the **Industrial Revolution** – from a new social system to simply new inventions – had their effect on this use. The **transistor revolution** might seem a loose or trivial phrase to someone who has taken the full weight of the sense of **social revolution**, and a **technological** or **second industrial revolution** might seem merely polemical or distracting descriptions. Yet the history of the word supports each kind of use. What is more significant, in a century of major revolutions, is the evident discrimination of application and tone, so that the storm-clouds that have gathered around the political sense become fresh and invigorating winds when they blow in almost any other direction.

See EVOLUTION, ORIGINAL, REFORM, VIOLENCE

ROMANTIC

Romantic is a complex word because it takes its modern senses from two distinguishable contexts: the content and character of **romances**, and the content and character of the **Romantic Movement**. The latter is usually dated to IC18 and eC19; it is in itself exceptionally complex and diverse. But **romantic** was in use in English well before this, with most of its still predominant modern associations. The adjective was formed in C17 from **romance** as it was then generally understood; English **romantic** is recorded from 1650; French *romanesque* from 1661; German *romanisch* from 1663. (French *romantique* and German *romantisch* were C18 adaptations from the English word.) But **romance** was itself then changing. The word in varying forms, *romanz*, *romaunz*, *roman*,

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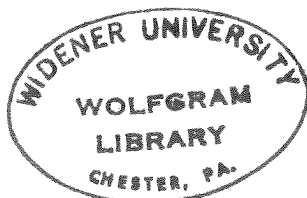
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movement. Thus it could be made compatible with the sense of **realism** that was distinguished from *naturalism*, and especially with that sense of a conscious commitment to understanding and describing real forces (a commitment that at its best includes understanding the processes of consciousness and composition that are involved in any such attempt). More often, however, the argument has been linked, in particular intellectual formations, with the idealist modes of **FORMALISM** and of **STRUCTURALISM** (qq.v.), where the strength of attention to the detailed practice of composition, and especially to the basic forms and structures within which composition occurs, goes along with or can be used to justify an indifference to the forces other than literary and artistic and intellectual practice which it was the purpose of the broader **realism** (even at times naively) to take into radical account. The historical significance of **Realism** was to make social and physical **reality** (in a generally materialist sense) the basis of literature, art and thought. Many marginal points can be made against the methods historically associated with this purpose, and from a frankly idealist position many radical points can be made against the purpose itself. But what has most often happened, recently, is that the marginal points have been extended, loosely, as if they were radical points, or that making the marginal points has been so absorbing that the radical points at issue, from a materialist or an idealist standpoint, have been in effect ignored.

It is hardly necessary to add that the critical attention which is necessary in most cases of the use of **real**, **realistic** and **reality** is at least equally necessary in the case of this extraordinary current variation in uses of **realism**.

See CONVENTION, CREATIVE, FICTION, MATERIALISM, MYTH, NATURALISM, PRACTICAL, RATIONAL, SUBJECTIVE

REFORM

Reform as a verb came into English in C14, from *fw reformer*, oF, *reformare*, L – to form again. In most of its early uses it is very difficult to distinguish between two latent senses: (i) to restore to its original form; (ii) to make into a new form. There are clear early

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examples of each use, but in many contexts the idea of changing
 something for the better was deeply bound up with the idea of restor-
 ing an earlier and less corrupted condition (cf. *amend*, from *fw*
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 with **reform** but which came through with a slighter or more limited
 reference; cf. also *reaction*). The first noun from the verb was
reformation, from C15, and this shows the same ambiguity. The
 great religious **Reformation** of C16 had a strong sense of purifica-
 tion and restoration, even when it needed new forms and institutions
 to achieve this. The continuing play in **reform** is clear in the
 exchange in *Hamlet* (III, ii):

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.
 O, reform it altogether.

From IC17 an alternative spelling, **re-form** ('Re-form and New-
 Mold', 1695) made some of the stronger uses clearer. Nevertheless
reform in its most general sense has continued to carry implications
 of amending an existing state of affairs in the light of known or
 existing principles, and this use can move towards *restoration* as
 often as towards *innovation*. The usual noun became **reform**, from
 mC17, but it was still mainly a noun of process, like **reformation**,
 until IC18. A C18 gloss (Bailey) gave 'Reform . . . a re-establishment
 or revival of a former neglected discipline; also a correction of
 reigning abuses'. **Reform** as a definite noun, for a specific measure,
 was common from IC18. In the same period it was capitalized and
 abstracted as a political tendency, mainly in relation to Parliament
 and the suffrage, where quite new forms were being proposed but
 often with a sense of the *restoration* of liberty.

In the struggle over Parliamentary representation, **Reform**
 became a radical term (cf. **Radical Reform** from IC18) and
parliamentary reformists who had been *subtle* (not a kind term) as
 early as 1641 were in correspondence with Jacobins (Windham,
 1792) and were seen as **violent reformists** (meaning 'ardent') by
 Lady Granville in 1830. The play in the word is evident. Cf. 'these
 Unions were to be for the promotion of the cause of reform, for the
 protection of life and property against the detailed but irregular
 outrages of the mob . . .' (*The Times*, 1 December 1830); 'that
 reform which had thus been obtained appeared to him to have been
 the ultimate means of strengthening the hands of corruption and

oppression' (Rider, *Leeds Times*, 12 April 1834; this and the preceding example are quoted in E. P. Thompson: *The Making of the English Working Class*, 810–26; 1963).

It was from this kind of controversy, assisted by the play in the word, that the C20 sense of **reformism** and **reformist** emerged. **Reformism** was a new word coined in the controversy within the socialist movement, especially between 1870 and 1910. The issue was whether capitalist society could be changed, or was indeed changing itself, in gradual, local and specific ways, or whether such **reforms** were trivial or illusory, either masking the need for the replacement of capitalism by socialism (REVOLUTION (q.v.)) or actually intended to prevent this replacement. **Reformism** in C20 use has had both these latter senses, and **reformist**, which from C16 had been generally equivalent to **reformer** (with which it was contemporary), has now been specialized to the sense of **reformism**, leaving **reformer** in the older general sense.

See FORM, RADICAL, REVOLUTION

REGIONAL

Region came into English from eC14, from fw *regionem*, L – direction, boundary, district, rw *regere*, L – to direct or to rule. Early uses of region as 'kingdom' became less important than the broader sense of a country or large area, as in Caxton: 'came in to the regyon of fraunce'. There is an evident tension within the word, as between a distinct area and a definite part. Each sense has survived, but it is the latter which carries an important history. Everything depends, in the latter sense, on the term of relation: a part of what? There are many general uses, as in 'infernal regions' or 'eternal Regions' (Milton, 1667); or 'the regyon of the ayer' (Caxton, 1477); or 'every region of science' (Johnson, 1751) or 'the region of mythology' (Jowett, 1875). But the critical use is in description of different parts of the earth: 'Libya is a region or coste of the countree of Afrika' (1542). This still primarily physical designation opened the way to a political use, in which **region** became an administered area, and thus part of a larger

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REVOLUTION

Revolution now has a predominant and specialized political meaning, but the historical development of this meaning is significant. The word came into English from C14, from fw *revolucion*, oF, *revolutionem*, L, from rw *revolvere*, L – to revolve. In all its early uses it indicated a **revolving** movement in space or time: 'in whiche the other Planetes, as well as the Sonne, do finyshe their revolution and course according to their true tyme' (1559); 'from the day of the date heereof, to the full terme and revolution of seven yeeres next ensuing' (1589); 'they recoyl again, and return in a Vortical motion, and so continue their revolution for ever' (1664). This primary use, of a recurrent physical movement, survives mainly in a technical sense of engines: **revolutions** per minute, usually shortened to **revs**.

The emergence of the political sense is very complicated. It is necessary to look first at what previous word served for an action against an established order. There was of course *treason* (with its root sense of *betraying* lawful authority) but the most general word was *rebellion*. This was common in English from C14. The sense had developed in Latin from the literal 'renewal of war' to the general sense of armed rising or opposition and, by extension, to open resistance to authority. *Rebellion* and *rebel* (as adjective, verb and noun) were then the central words for what we would now normally (but significantly not always) call **revolution** and **revolutionary**. There was also, from C16, the significant development of *revolt*, from fw *révolter*, F, *revolutare*, L – to roll or revolve, which from the beginning, in English, was used in a political sense. The development of two words, *revolt* and **revolution**, from the sense of a circular movement to the sense of a political rising, can hardly be simple coincidence.

Revolution was probably affected, in its political development, by the closeness of *revolt*, but in English its sense of a circular movement lasted at least a century longer. There are probably two underlying causes for the transfer (in both *revolt* and **revolution**)

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from a circular movement to a rising. On the one hand there was the simple physical sense of the normal distribution of power as that of the *high* over the *low*. From the point of view of any established authority, a *revolt* is an attempt to turn over, to turn upside down, to make topsy-turvy, a normal political order: the *low* putting themselves against and in that sense above the *high*. This is still evident in Hobbes, *Leviathan*, II, 28: 'such as are they, that having been by their own act Subjects, deliberately revolting, deny the Sovereign Power' (1651). On the other hand, but eventually leading to the same emphasis, there was the important image of the Wheel of Fortune, through which so many of the movements of life and especially the most public movements were interpreted. In the simplest sense, men revolved, or more strictly were revolved, on Fortune's wheel, setting them now up, now down. In practice, in most uses, it was the downward movement, the *fall*, that was stressed. But in any case it was the *reversal* between up and down that was the main sense of the image: not so much the steady and continuous movement of a wheel as the particular isolation of a top and bottom point which were, as a matter of course, certain to change places. The crucial change in **revolution** was at least partly affected by this. As early as 1400 there was the eventually characteristic:

It is I, that am come down
Thurgh change and revolucioun. (*Romance of the Rose*, 4366)

A sense of **revolution** as alteration or change is certainly evident from C15: 'of Elementys the Revoluciouns, Chaung of tymes and Complexiouns' (Lydgate, c. 1450). The association with *fortune* was explicit as late as mC17: 'whereby one may see, how great the revolutions of time and fortune are' (1663).

The political sense, already well established in *revolt*, began to come through in **revolution** from eC17, but there was enough overlap with older ways of seeing change to make most early examples ambiguous. Cromwell made a revolution, but when he said that 'God's revolutions' were not to be attributed to mere human invention (Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Cromwell*, III, 590–2) he was probably still using the word with an older sense (as in *Fortune*, but now *Providential*) of external and DETERMINING (q.v.) movements. Indeed the most fascinating aspect of this complex of words, in C17, is that Cromwell's revolution was called, by its

enemies, the *Great Rebellion*, while the relatively minor events of 1688 were called by their supporters the **Great** and eventually the **Glorious Revolution**. It is evident from several uses that **revolution** was gaining a political sense through C17, though still, as has been noted, with overlap to general mutability or to the movements of Fortune or Providence. But it is very significant that in IC17 the lesser event attracted the description **Revolution** while the greater event was still *Rebellion*. **Revolution**, that is to say, was still the more generally favourable word, and from as late as 1796 we can find that distinction: 'Rebellion is the subversion of the laws, and Revolution is that of tyrants'. (*Subversion*, it will be noted, depends on the same physical image, of turning over from below; and cf. *overthrow*.) The main reason for the preference of **revolution** to *rebellion* was that the cyclical sense in the former implied a *restoration* or *renovation* of an earlier lawful authority, as distinct from action against authority without such justification.

From IC17 the sense of **revolution** in English was dominated by specific reference to the events of 1688. The ordinary reference (Steele, 1710; Burke, 1790) was to 'the Revolution', and **revolutioner**, the first noun for one engaged in or supporting **revolution**, was used primarily in that specific context. Yet a new general sense was slowly making its way through, and there was renewed cause for distinction between *rebellion* and **revolution**, according to point of view, in the rising and declaration of independence of the American states. **Revolution** won through in that case, both locally and generally. In a new climate of political thought, in which the adequacy of a political system rather than loyalty to a particular sovereign was more and more taken as the real issue, **revolution** came to be preferred to **rebellion**, by anyone who supported *independent* change. There is a surviving significance in this, in our own time. *Rebellion* is still ordinarily used by a dominant power and its friends, until (or even after) it has to admit that what has been taking place – with its own *independent* cause and loyalties – is a **revolution**, though also with an added sense of scale: 'Sire . . . it is not a revolt, it is a revolution' (Carlyle, *French Revolution*, V vii; 1837). (It is worth noting that *revolt* and *revolting* had acquired, from mC18, an application to feeling as well as to action: a feeling of disgust, of turning away, of *revulsion*; this probably accentuated the distinction. It is curious that *revulsion* is etymologically associated

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with *revel*, which itself goes back to *rebellare*, L – to rebel. *Revel* became specialized, through a sense of riotous mirth, to any lively festivity; *rebel* took its separate unfavourable course; *revulsion*, from a physical sense of drawing away, took on from eC19 its sense of drawing away in disgust.)

It was in this state of interaction between the words that the specific effects of the French Revolution made the modern sense of **revolution** decisive. The older sense of a restoration of lawful authority, though used in occasional justification, was overridden by the sense of necessary innovation of a new order, supported by the increasingly positive sense of PROGRESS (q.v.). Of course the sense of achievement of the ORIGINAL rights of man was also relevant. This sense of making a new *human* order was always as important as that of overthrowing an old order. That, after all, was now the crucial distinction from *rebellion* or from what was eventually distinguished as a **palace revolution** (changing the leaders but not the forms of society). Yet in political controversy arising from the actual history of armed risings and conflicts, **revolution** took on a specialized meaning of violent overthrow, and by IC19 was being contrasted with EVOLUTION (q.v.) in its sense of a new social order brought about by peaceful and constitutional means. The sense of **revolution** as bringing about a wholly new social order was greatly strengthened by the socialist movement, and this led to some complexity in the distinction between **revolutionary** and *evolutionary* socialism. From one point of view the distinction was between violent overthrow of the old order and peaceful and constitutional change. From another point of view, which is at least equally valid, the distinction was between working for a wholly new social order (SOCIALISM as opposed to CAPITALISM (qq.v.)) and the more limited modification or REFORM (q.v.) of an existing order ('the pursuit of equality' within a 'mixed economy' or 'post-capitalist society'). The argument about means, which has often been used to specialize **revolution**, is also usually an argument about ends.

Revolution and **revolutionary** and **revolutionize** have of course also come to be used, outside political contexts, to indicate fundamental changes, or fundamentally new developments, in a very wide range of activities. It can seem curious to read of 'a **revolution** in shopping habits' or of the '**revolution** in transport', and of course there are cases when this is simply the language of publicity, to

describe some 'dynamic' new product. But in some ways this is at least no more strange than the association of **revolution** with VIOLENCE (q.v.), since one of the crucial senses of the word, early and late, restorative or innovative, had been simply important or fundamental change. Once the factory system and the new technology of IC18 and eC19 had been called, by analogy with the French Revolution, the INDUSTRIAL (q.v.) **Revolution**, one basis for description of new institutions and new technologies as **revolutionary** had been laid. Variations in interpretation of the **Industrial Revolution** – from a new social system to simply new inventions – had their effect on this use. The **transistor revolution** might seem a loose or trivial phrase to someone who has taken the full weight of the sense of **social revolution**, and a **technological** or **second industrial revolution** might seem merely polemical or distracting descriptions. Yet the history of the word supports each kind of use. What is more significant, in a century of major revolutions, is the evident discrimination of application and tone, so that the storm-clouds that have gathered around the political sense become fresh and invigorating winds when they blow in almost any other direction.

See EVOLUTION, ORIGINAL, REFORM, VIOLENCE

ROMANTIC

Romantic is a complex word because it takes its modern senses from two distinguishable contexts: the content and character of **romances**, and the content and character of the **Romantic Movement**. The latter is usually dated to IC18 and eC19; it is in itself exceptionally complex and diverse. But **romantic** was in use in English well before this, with most of its still predominant modern associations. The adjective was formed in C17 from **romance** as it was then generally understood; English **romantic** is recorded from 1650; French *romanesque* from 1661; German *romanisch* from 1663. (French *romantique* and German *romantisch* were C18 adaptations from the English word.) But **romance** was itself then changing. The word in varying forms, *romanz*, *romaunz*, *roman*,

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